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JOHN STUART MILL

WORKS BY JOHN STUART MILL

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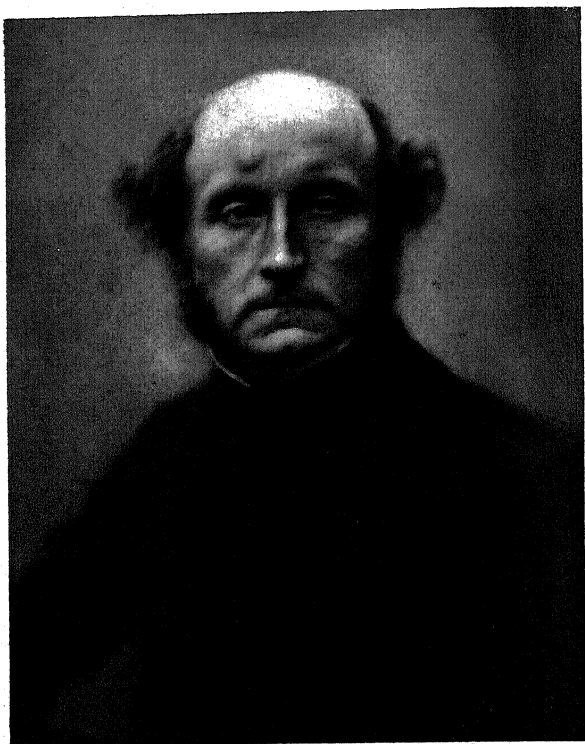
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Emory Walker Ph. sc.

John Stuart Mill
from a Daguerreotype

THE LETTERS OF JOHN STUART MILL

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

HUGH S. R. ELLIOT

WITH A NOTE ON MILL'S PRIVATE LIFE, BY

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VOL. I

WITH PORTRAITS

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PREFACE

ON Mill's death in 1873, he left behind him an almost complete record of his correspondence over a large period of his life. Pains-taking and assiduous to a unique degree, he rarely wrote a letter even on unimportant matters without a liberal sprinkling of erasures and interlineations, which often made its deciphering a task of some difficulty. He therefore formed the habit of transcribing every letter he wrote after he had revised it; the transcribed letter he despatched to his correspondent, while he himself carefully preserved the rough draft. These rough drafts accumulated in the course of years to many thousands, and it is from them that the bulk of the present book is taken. It was clearly Mill's intention that a selection of them should be published after his death, for across many of them he had written—"For publication. J. S. Mill." While I have included in the present collection all those so marked by Mill, even though in some cases their interest at the present day hardly seemed to justify it, I have inserted in addition a large number which he had not marked, but which appeared to me to possess an interest, either on account of modern developments in political and philosophical speculation, or on some other grounds.

The first three chapters of the book are derived from a different source. With the exception of one letter to Gustave d'Eichthal, they consist exclusively of letters to Carlyle, John Sterling, and Lytton Bulwer (afterwards Lord Lytton). The letters to Sterling are printed from the letters actually sent by Mill, which were apparently returned by Sterling's relatives after his death. In the case of the letters to Carlyle and Bulwer, I have not had

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access to the originals, but only to copies. The Carlyle side of the correspondence is preserved with the Mill papers ; but I have failed to obtain permission to print it.

I have generally excluded from the present collection such letters as have already been published in other works—those for instance appearing in Mrs. Grote's *Life of her husband*, in Duncan's "*Life of Herbert Spencer*," in the "*Memories*" of Caroline Fox, in the *Letters of Kingsley*, of Gustave d'Eichthal, the "*Lettres inédites de Mill à Comte*," &c., &c.

Miss Helen Taylor, to whom the letters passed when Mill died, took no steps towards their publication. Her death took place on 29th January 1907, and the letters then became the property of Miss Mary Taylor, daughter of Algernon Taylor, and grand-daughter of Mrs. Mill. She decided that the time had come for the publication of the letters, which are accordingly now presented to the public.

Among the various portraits included in the book, I wish to draw special attention to that of James Mill. Like the portrait published in Bain's "*Life of James Mill*," it is from a drawing that originally belonged to Mrs. Grote. It is the portrait of which Bain wrote in his preface to that biography: "A still better likeness was at one time in her possession, but I cannot learn what became of it." It may therefore be considered as the best existing likeness of James Mill. The frontispiece of vol. ii. is from the well-known Watts portrait hanging in the National Portrait Gallery. This is not the portrait for which Mill actually sat, but is a copy of it made by Watts from his original, which is now in the possession of Sir Charles Dilke.

The index is the work of Mr. Richard Gurney, B.A.

HUGH ELLIOT.

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INTRODUCTION

IN the brief sketch of Mill's life and character that I am about to give, I propose to make very slight reference to his home life and domestic surroundings. I have been so fortunate as to secure from Miss Mary Taylor a short paper on this subject, embodying the information which she acquired from her father Mr. Algernon Taylor, and from her aunt Miss Helen Taylor, with whom she lived for a few years.

The family of Mill¹ sprang from a part of Scotland, on the slopes of the Grampian chain, that is famous for the production of metaphysical talent. James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, was the eldest son of a small shoemaker, who appears to have been an honest and intelligent man, but not notably different from his neighbours. The shoemaker's wife was believed to have been brought up in better circumstances, her descent in the world being due to the fact of her father joining in the Stuart rising of 1745. At all events, she set her heart from an early date on bringing up her eldest son as a gentleman. In this ambition she was greatly encouraged by the marvellous precocity that young James soon displayed. From the parish school of Logie Pert he passed to Montrose Academy, where he stayed till nearly eighteen. During the whole of his youth he was never once called upon to assist in his father's trade, or to work in the fields, or to do any other manual labour. His parents succeeded, not only in dispensing with his assistance, but in finding the money to carry him through a continuous

¹ The name Mill is the same as the common Scotch name of Milne. In James Mill's birth register, indeed, his father's name is spelt Milne. For this and other statements concerning James Mill, the authority is Bain's "Life of James Mill."

course of education. That he can have had no superfluous luxuries is obvious ; his weekly board while at Montrose Academy is set down at half-a-crown. On leaving the Academy, he was appointed tutor to the daughter of Sir John Stuart of Fettercairn, the young lady who afterwards became the heroine of Scott's passion ; and being taken in this capacity to Edinburgh, was able to avail himself of the courses of study at Edinburgh University. It was probably while studying at Edinburgh University that he laid the foundation of many of his friendships in later life ; for his fellow-students included Thomas M'Crie, John Leyden, Thomas Thomson the chemist, David Brewster, William Wallace, and Brougham.

The incidents of his life at this time and during the next ten or twelve years, are involved in obscurity. It is believed that he acted as tutor in various families ; but it was not till he had reached the age of twenty-nine that he went up to London, and commenced his literary career. At this time he is described as being strikingly handsome and well-proportioned, exceedingly attractive in conversation, and charming in manner. I need not trace the various stages of his literary progress. Suffice it to say that he was quickly appointed to two editorships, bringing in over £500 a year, and that two years after his arrival in London he married Harriet Burrow, a young woman of Yorkshire family, daughter of a widow who kept an establishment for lunatics at Hoxton. The marriage was never happy. From the letters of hers which I have had the opportunity of examining, I have no doubt that she was of a kind and loving disposition, but not competent to enter into the exalted intellectual occupations of her husband. Almost immediately after his marriage Mill lost both his editorships, and thereafter appears to have been thrown for his support wholly upon what he could earn with his pen. The difficulties which beset him may easily be imagined, when I mention that his family went on increasing until he ultimately had no fewer than nine children.

It is with the eldest of this numerous family that we have here specially to deal. John Stuart Mill was born on 20th May 1806, and from the earliest age was subjected to that remarkable experiment in education which I shall shortly describe. The remainder of James Mill's career need not detain us long. It was during the period of his greatest poverty that he wrote the "History of British India," the most famous of all his writings. His labours at this time were enormous. He told Francis Place that his working day was from 5 A.M. to 11 P.M.¹ The work took him ten years to execute, hampered as he was by the necessity of writing for his living and educating his children. Soon after its completion, the influence of his friends procured him an appointment to the India House. Here his immense ability and energy gradually brought him to the highest post; and on his death from consumption in 1836, he was in the enjoyment of a salary of £2000 a year. The best known of his later writings was his "Analysis of the Human Mind"; a very able, though, from a modern standpoint, a very incomplete exposition of Psychology; being largely devoted to an attempt to analyse complex emotions into elementary sensations, under the law of Association.

During his lifetime he was best known as the lieutenant and fervent disciple of Jeremy Bentham. His friendship with Bentham was, indeed, one of the most important factors in his career. At the time when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, Bentham assisted him, not only by letting him a house in London at half the normal rent, but by entertaining him at his place, Ford Abbey in Devonshire, for many months together, year after year. Mill accepted Bentham's principles in their entirety, and drove them everywhere to their logical conclusions. On Bentham's death he fell naturally into the position of leader of the Utilitarians; and the standard expression of the views of the school at that time were summed up succinctly in his famous article on "Government" written for the supplement to the third edition of

¹ "The English Utilitarians," by Leslie Stephen, vol. ii. p. 23.

the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. But we are here more nearly concerned with another article he wrote for the same publication—that, namely, on “Education.” The theory underlying the two articles is in reality the same. In each Mill assumes the indefinite modifiability of human nature by education and environment. Just as in the article “Government” he assumes that a sound political organisation will remove all evils from the body politic, so, in the article “Education,” he assumes that a sound system of education will remove all the evils in human nature. He adopts the theory of Helvetius that mankind are all born alike, that a child’s mind is *tabula rasa*, on which may be indelibly stamped any impression it is desired to make, and that all human differences are solely due to differences in education. To believe in a principle was with Mill to apply it in every situation where there seemed any room whatever for its application ; and he was not slow to put his theories into practice in the education of his son.

During his early years, John Mill was subjected to so vehement and strenuous an education, as perhaps had never been seen before, and never will be seen again. James Mill was a man of iron will, of energy almost miraculous ; he was largely indifferent to pleasure or pain, and inaccessible to the softer sides of human existence. From the moment that John was born, he had decided what John should be. The details of the education are fully set forth in the “Autobiography,” but may be recapitulated here. He started learning to read when he was two years old.¹ He began the study of Greek when he was three ; and when he was still only seven, he had read the whole of Herodotus, and of Xenophon’s “Cyræpædia” and “Memorials of Socrates” ; some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius ; part of Lucian, and Isocrates ad Demonicum and Ad Nicoclem. When he was eight, he read the first six dialogues of Plato, from the Euthyphron to the Theætetus inclusive. Mill observes : “My father demanded of me not only the utmost that I

¹ “John Stuart Mill,” by Alexander Bain, p. 1.

could do, but much that I could by no possibility have done." At this age Mill had undergone in addition an extended course of English reading, including Robertson's histories, Hume, Gibbon, Watson's "Philip the Second and Third," Hooke's "History of Rome," two or three volumes of a translation of Rollin's "Ancient History of Greece," Langhorne's translation of Plutarch, Burnet's "History of His Own Time," the historical part of the "Annual Register" from the beginning down to about 1788, Millar's "Historical View of the English Government," Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," Mc'Crie's "Life of John Knox," Sewell and Rutt's Histories of the Quakers, and a number of other books besides. Thoroughly characteristic of James Mill's stern philosophy was his fondness for putting into his son's hands "books which exhibited men of energy and resource in unusual circumstances, struggling against difficulties and overcoming them."

That Mill continued to flourish under this severe treatment must be attributed partly to the vigour of his own constitution, and partly to the fact that his father was one of the most brilliant men, and the leading psychologist of the age. Under less able guidance, Mill's youthful mind would assuredly have been crushed and maimed; but in the hands of James Mill that fatality was avoided, and the precise result which he desired was achieved. When John was six years old, and his father's health seemed very precarious, Bentham wrote one of his characteristic letters, offering to undertake the guardianship of the child. It is addressed to James Mill from Queen's Square Place, dated Saturday, 25th July 1812, and runs as follows:—

"If in the meantime any such thing as dying should happen to you (for we are all mortal!!!!), you having however between the act of such dying as aforesaid and the act of receiving these presents, time to make your *will* (which to the purpose in question may be done by word of mouth, but if you cannot write it yourself better have it set down in writing and read to you), if you will appoint me guardian to Mr. John Stuart Mill, I will, in the event of his father's being disposed of elsewhere, take

him to Q. S. P.¹ and there or elsewhere, by whipping or otherwise, do whatsoever may seem most necessary and proper, for teaching him to make all proper distinctions, such as between the Devil and the Holy Ghost, and how to make Codes and Encyclopædias, and whatsoever else may be proper to be made, so long as I remain an inhabitant of this vale of tears, after which—but this must remain for God's providence to determine. . . ."

Clearly James Mill had been suffering from gout, for farther on in the same letter, Bentham offers to "come and sit with you, and help worship Mistink,² and during the armistice of your arm, help whip Mr. John Mill."

To this Mill replied :³ "I take your offer quite seriously, and then we may perhaps leave him a successor worthy of both of us."

From the eighth to the twelfth year Mill's education was carried forward on the same inexorable plan. The list of classical authors read during this period would be tedious to enumerate ; geometry and algebra were included in the curriculum, as also the differential calculus and other branches of the higher mathematics. He was exceedingly fond of history ; and while he was still eleven he had composed a Roman History, "picked out of Hooke" ; an "Abridgment of the Ancient Universal History" ; a "History of Holland" ; and a "History of the Roman Government," compiled from Livy and Dionysius. At twelve, he began logic and read the "Organon," though he observes that he "profited little by the Posterior Analytics." He read several Latin treatises on the scholastic logic.

In 1818 the "History of India" was published, and in the following year James Mill received his appointment to the India House. But his new duties did not cause him to relax the rigour of his son's education. When the latter was thirteen years of age, he took him through a complete course of political economy.

¹ Queen's Square Place.

² The cat.

³ "The English Utilitarians," by Leslie Stephen, vol. iii. p. 3.

The mode of instruction in political economy adopted by James Mill well exemplifies the methods of his teaching. To impart to a child of thirteen knowledge of a subject naturally so abstruse, and so forbidding to a youthful mind, involved all the grave dangers which "cramming" inevitably brings—a weakening of the intelligence by an undue tax on the receptive powers of the pupil. But Mill took care that his education should not degenerate into mere blind cramming. There was at that time no text-book which embodied the most recent results of economic science; Ricardo's great work had not yet been published. So Mill, in the course of his daily walks with his son, delivered expositions to him on the subject, which John had to write out afterwards and hand to his father next day. The notes thus accumulated served as a basis for the "Elements of Political Economy" which James Mill subsequently wrote. These notes had to be written over and over again before the exacting father was satisfied.

When John had reached the age of fourteen, there occurred a break in his life which marks the end of his first period of education. He was invited by Sir Samuel Bentham, brother of Jeremy Bentham, for a six months' visit in the South of France; and the invitation being subsequently extended to twelve months, he was able to spend a year in gaining experience of the world from a totally new aspect. It may easily be imagined that a change from the strenuous and intellectual, though narrow, outlook of his father's household had become well-nigh a necessity. Life hitherto had been for him a purely intellectual experience. If it had been marred by no unhappiness or misery, neither had it brought any pleasures or intensity of feeling. Can we wonder, then, at the profound impression produced upon his young and ardent mind, when he first gazed upon the grand mountain scenery of the Pyrenees? Here was a novel sensation indeed! Here was something, not intellectual, which yet produced a hitherto unexperienced elation of soul. Here, for the first time, his virgin emotions

were deeply stirred; the first ray of sunshine fell that germ in his character which afterwards sprang up, leading him to rebel against his father's and throw over the crabbed doctrines of the utilitarians.

His studies, however, were not discontinued during his residence in France. Chemistry, zoology, metaphysics, logic, were a few of the subjects to which he devoted himself; while he acquired at the same time a thorough acquaintance with the French language and a proficiency in which appears in the letters to distinguished Frenchmen scattered through the present volumes. He returned to England in 1821, and thereafter the course of his former studies was resumed. Psychology occupied a great share of his attention. He studied Roman law with John Austin, and at the age of fifty a mental revolution was wrought in him by the reading of Dumont's "*Traité de Législation*," in which works the principal speculations of Bentham were interpreted for the world. This book supplied to Mill a system of philosophy which focussed his opinions, and gave him a creed, not maintained by the intellect, but enthusiastically supported by the whole mind. This doubtless marks the stage at which he first began to think for himself, to rely upon his own opinions, to take the first and most arduous step in his emancipation from the bondage of authority. For many persons this stage has been reached, as it was for Mill, by a sudden revolution, which is often delayed till comparatively late in life; with others it is a gradual growth; while with the great majority it is never reached at all.

From this time forward Mill's intellectual cultivation was carried on by writing even more than by reading. He committed to paper various essays on political and historical subjects, which, besides the educative effect of preparing them, led to instructive conversations with his father. From this time also he commenced to converse with the able men collected round his father. He formed a small society of young men who, like himself, had

der the influence of Bentham and James Mill. To this society he gave the name of the Utilitarian Society; and the label thus selected gradually became adopted into the language to designate the system of views held by these thinkers. At the age of seventeen he entered upon his professional career with an appointment from the East India Company immediately under his father; in which service he was destined to remain for thirty-five years, until the abolition of the Company in 1858.

The commencement of Mill's literary activities dates from the foundation of the *Westminster Review* in 1824. Before that time he had written a few short articles in one or two newspapers, but they were of little importance. In 1823 Bentham formed the project of starting a review which should act as a vehicle for the expression of the views held by him and his disciples. At the same period, however, he happened to be projected a scheme for the foundation of a purely literary journal; and the two projects were amalgamated, resulting in the issue of the first number of the *Westminster Review* in April 1824. It attracted immediate notice, mainly on account of an article by James Mill criticising the *Edinburgh Review* at its foundation. The attack on the *Edinburgh* was continued by the son in the second number; and thenceforward he continued to be closely associated with the *Review*, which took its place as the special organ of Philosophic Radicalism."

About the beginning of 1825 a new work was undertaken by Mill—that of editing and preparing for the press Bentham's book on Evidence. Bentham had commenced the execution of this work no less than three times, but on each occasion had failed to complete it. His papers had already been used by Dumont as a foundation for his "Traité des Preuves Judiciaires"; and he now entrusted Mill with the task of condensing the masses of manuscript into a single treatise. The opportunity which it afforded of cultivating his powers of composition. The practice which he derived from it

benefited him to such an extent that he was able to "Everything which I wrote subsequently to this edition of employment was markedly superior to anything I had written before it."

It was about this time that Mill tells us he passed through a critical period of nervous depression and mental inertia. He seems to have been troubled by all sorts of curious fancies. He was, for instance, "seriously tormented by the thought of the exhaustion of musical combinations. The octave consists only of five tones and two semi-tones, which can be put together in only a limited number of ways, of which but a small proportion are beautiful: most of these, it seemed to him, must have been already discovered, and there could be room for a long succession of Mozarts and Weber to strike out, as these had done, entirely new and surprising rich veins of musical beauty." He awoke from this condition to a reaction from the fervent Benthamism which had till then possessed him. The reaction was instituted by his chancing to open a copy of Wordsworth and deriving great enjoyment from it. Thereupon his mind was opened to new ideas from all quarters, and he scandalised his former friends by studying Coleridge, Goethe, and Carlyle. He was greatly influenced by the theories of the St. Simonians, who were then beginning to attract attention in France; and he very soon came under the spell of Auguste Comte.

From this time onward the "Letters" supply a tolerably connected history of Mill's life; and I can only touch lightly on the more important events of his career. In 1830 he was introduced to Mrs. Taylor, and thus commenced the great affection of his life. After twenty years of the closest intimacy, the death of Mrs. Taylor's husband left her free to marry again. But during this time Mill's reputation suffered greatly through his connection with her. His father "regarded him with being in love with another man's wife," and expressed "his strong disapproval of the affair."¹

¹ "John Stuart Mill," by A. Bain, p. 163.

affection was intense, and when they ultimately married, they withdrew almost entirely from society. The dedication to the "Liberty," the inscription on her tomb at Avignon, the "Autobiography," indicate the intensity of feeling.

In 1835 Sir William Molesworth founded the *London Review*, on the understanding that Mill should act as editor. Soon afterwards Molesworth bought the *Westminster Review* and united it with the *London*, which was conducted by Mill till 1840 under the title of the *London and Westminster Review*. It was of course used to propagate the views of the Philosophic Radicals; but Mill had no intention of confining it to one narrow school of thought, and admitted articles by such men as Carlyle and John Sterling. The *Review* never paid its way; after two or three years Molesworth determined to part with it, and it was acquired by Mill himself. He kept it till 1840, when he passed it on to one of the most regular of its contributors. The "Logic" was published in the spring of 1843. It was offered to Murray but refused by him, and was finally published by the firm of Parker. On the completion of the "Logic," he turned his thoughts to a work on "Ethology," or the science of character; but, failing to make anything of it, turned his attention to writing the "Political Economy," which was published in 1848. All this time he continued his career at the India House, and in 1856 reached the highest place in the office. He only enjoyed that position for two years; on the abolition of the East India Company in 1858, he retired on a pension of £1500 a year. In the same year he suffered the crowning calamity of his life, namely, his wife's death at Avignon, while on their way to the South of France.

The shock was, indeed, terrible. Mill took a cottage in the district of St. Véran, near Avignon, close to her tomb, and for most of the remainder of his life made this his home, spending only a short part of each year at his house at Blackheath. Miss Helen Taylor, Mrs. Mill's daughter, now kept house for her stepfather;

and the tranquillity of his subsequent life was only interrupted during the three years (1865-1868) that he represented Westminster in the House of Commons. The story of his election and subsequent defeat are recorded in detail in the "Letters," and I need do no more than allude to it.

During his retirement he wrote several works. The most important is that on "Liberty," which he believed was "likely to survive longer than anything else that I have written (with the possible exception of the 'Logic')." It was the joint product, he tells us, of himself and his wife, and was published immediately after her death. Among his other productions were the "Utilitarianism," the "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," the "Representative Government," the "Subjection of Women." He died on 8th May 1873. During his life he had suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis, which profoundly injured one lung, but proceeded no further. A few days before his death he went on a botanical excursion with some friends; and after a long walk, feeling tired, he adopted the unusual course of taking a carriage home. The unaccustomed drive at night in his over-fatigued condition gave him a chill, which developed into erysipelas—a disease endemic around Avignon in consequence of the marshes in the neighbourhood. The disease soon attacked the brain, and killed him in a day or two.

Mill's education was so remarkable that we turn with interest to an analysis of his character. We find it to be, indeed, very different from anything that his published works would suggest. So far from being a mere "logic-chopping machine," Mill was a man of such intensity and depth of feeling as is rarely to be met with. In vain do we search in his character for those weaknesses, whether of emotion or of will, that are so often found to accompany transcendent intellectual power. Mill's superiority of intellect was not derived from any sapping of other departments of his mind. He was not, like Herbert Spencer, deficient in power of application to

disagreeable subjects, nor in the active and volitional side of mind; nor was he, like Jeremy Bentham, or James Mill, or Alexander Bain, a man of low emotional susceptibility. Mill's emotional history is perhaps the most remarkable element of a remarkable personality. His upbringing, as we have seen, was carried out without the smallest reference to emotional cultivation. From the earliest years he was absorbed in intellectual pursuits; there was no outlet for the natural affections of his childhood. True, he had brothers and sisters; but his relation to them was rather that of teacher than of playmate. "I never was a boy," he wrote sadly;¹ for almost his entire waking hours were applied to study, and relaxation would have brought down upon him the austere censure of his father. That he was bound to his father by strong ties there can be no question. But the ties were not the ties of love; they were constituted by the cold sentiments of respect and awe, and the enthralling influence of a powerful personality upon the unformed mind of a child. Yet the large endowment of feeling which Nature had implanted in his youthful mind was not extirpated by this radical treatment. It was perhaps overlaid and rendered latent for a time. But as the boy grew older it gradually asserted itself with increasing insistence. I have already pointed out how profoundly he was affected by the mountain scenery of the Pyrenees. Even in the most sectarian period of his Benthamism, a chance reading of Pope's "Essay on Man," promulgating views in every respect contrary to his own, wrought a vivid effect upon his imagination. Later still, his admiration of Wordsworth heralded and symbolised the breach which was shortly to take place with his father's views. And then there came the warm friendships with Carlyle and with John Sterling, friendships cemented by true affection, and not owing their strength to mere intellectual community. But the culminating point of his increasing emotional fervour was reached when he became acquainted

¹ "Journals of Caroline Fox," quoted by W. L. Courtney in his "Life of John Stuart Mill."

with Mrs. Taylor. Then, indeed, the pent-up emotions burst the bonds which a cramped education had set to them; then indeed did they break forth with a torrent of irresistible force which carried all before it. Let me not here be misunderstood. The passion which Mill conceived for Mrs. Taylor had in it nothing that was vulgar or inclined to sensuality. It is obvious, in fact, from his published writings, that Mill greatly under-estimated the power of sensual passion in the motives of the average of mankind. In his views on the question of population, he proposed as a remedial measure a continence between married couples which betokened little conception of the power of the lower feelings in human nature. Close students of Mill, such as Leslie Stephen, Alexander Bain, and Professor Ashley, have remarked on the low degree of sensuality which inspired Mill. And I am able to add to the weight of their opinion the evidence which I have had before me, in the whole series of letters written by Mill to his wife. They are letters inspired by the most intense emotion; in them Mill pours out his whole soul with the most absolute unreservedness; the uncertain flicker of feeling which had survived his education has blazed out into a roaring flame; but from beginning to end there is nowhere a suggestion of anything but the highest and noblest sentiments. The truth is, that he set her up as an idol and worshipped her. Had the affair descended to the commonplace level of a guilty intrigue, the spiritual aspect on which his mind so deeply dwelt would have been dissipated—the idol would have fallen shattered at his feet.

Mill's emotional bent appears in other dressings besides his love for his wife. His sympathy with persons was so keen that he was often led to express, in communication with them, a greater degree of agreement than he actually felt. Of this several instances will be noticed in the "Letters." Emotional fervour, again, was the origin of his social and political interests. A disinterested desire for the improvement of the condition of humanity was one

of the fundamental sentiments of Mill's mind. He was a humanitarian of the highest type. His political and economic studies were only in part prompted by the truly scientific spirit whose sole purpose is the discovery of truth. Far more were they undertaken to satisfy his restless desire to improve the lot of mankind. As I have already observed, Mill's life shows a steady expansion of the emotional sphere, following on the artificial constriction caused by his education. In 1843, when he was a comparatively young man, he published the "Logic," the most purely scientific and the least affected by emotion of any of his works. From there he advanced to "Ethology," or a science of character; but abandoning this, advanced again to the "Political Economy," which was published in 1848. In the "Political Economy" the love of scientific truth is still the dominant note; but it has more emotional colouring than the "Logic." The "Letters" show how, as time went on, Mill's interests were more and more monopolised by his desire for human welfare. I discern here a great difference between Mill and his father. James Mill, vehement Radical as he was, cared less for humanity than his son. Bentham said of him that his political opinions resulted less from love of the many than from hatred of the few;¹ and however indignantly his son may have repudiated the suggestion, I suspect that it contains some measure of truth. However this may be, I think I have said sufficient to show how largely John Stuart Mill's life was inspired by feeling and emotion.

We are apt to imagine, as indeed we have some grounds for doing, that the emotional temperament carries with it a dreamy and inactive disposition in the practical affairs of life. But here, as so often in the study of Mill's character, we find our *à priori* anticipations altogether off the mark. For Mill possessed an endowment of practical energy to a degree far higher than the average. His life throughout was intense; his output of literary work was astonishing; he scarcely ever appeared to require rest.

¹ Bowring's "Life of Bentham," in Bentham's Works.

The diary which he kept while staying with Sir Samuel Bentham in France serves to illustrate the strenuous manner in which his days were spent. I quote from Bain :¹—

“ 5th.—Rose at 5 ; too rainy for bathing. Five chapters of Voltaire ; from $7\frac{1}{2}$ till $8\frac{1}{2}$, Mr. G. corrects his French exercises, which had got into arrears as regards correction ; Music-master came ; at $9\frac{1}{2}$ began new exercises (French) ; puts his room in order ; at $11\frac{1}{4}$ took out Lucian and finished Necyomantia ; five propositions of Legendre, renewed expressions of his superiority to all other geometers ; practises music-lessons ; Thomson’s Chemistry, makes out various Chemical Tables, the drift not explained ; at $3\frac{1}{4}$, tries several propositions in West (Algebra), and made out two that he had formerly failed in ; begins a table of 58 rivers in France, to show what departments each passes through, and the chief towns on their banks ; 4, dined ; finishes Chemical Table ; dancing lesson ; supped. . . . 6th.—Rose at 6 ; no bathing ; five chapters of Voltaire ; a quarter of an hour to West’s problems ; lesson in Music (Principes) ; problems resumed ; breakfasted, and tried problem again till $10\frac{1}{4}$; French exercises till 11 ; began to correct his Dialogue, formerly mentioned, till $12\frac{1}{4}$; summoned to dress for going out to call ; has found a French master ; at $1\frac{1}{4}$, returned and corrected Dialogue till $3\frac{1}{4}$; Thomson till 4 (dinner), resumed till 6 ; Mr. G. corrects his French exercises ; went out for his French lesson, but the master did not teach on Sundays and Thursdays ; back to Thomson till 8 ; repeated fables to Mr. G. ; miscellaneous affairs ; supped ; journal always written just before going to bed. 7th.—Rose $5\frac{3}{4}$; five chapters Voltaire till 7 ; till $7\frac{1}{4}$, 46 lines of Virgil ; till 8, Lucian’s Jupiter Confutatus ; goes on a family errand ; Music-lesson till 9 (Principes) ; Lucian continued till $9\frac{1}{2}$, and finished after breakfast at $10\frac{1}{4}$; a call required him to dress ; read Thomson and made tables till $12\frac{1}{4}$; seven propositions of Legendre . . . ; till $1\frac{1}{2}$, wrote exercises and various miscellanies ; till $2\frac{1}{2}$, the treatise

¹ “ John Stuart Mill,” p. 18.

on Adverbs ; till $3\frac{3}{4}$, Thomson ; Livre Géographique and Miscellanies till 5. . . . 9th.—Rose at 5 ; five chapters of Voltaire ; $6\frac{3}{4}$, Adverbs ; $7\frac{3}{4}$, the Prometheus of Lucian ; $8\frac{1}{2}$ till 9, first lesson of Solféges, together with Principes ; continued Prometheus till breakfast. . . .”

Perhaps the most interesting side of Mill's character is reached when we come to estimate his intellectual qualities. By far the most striking intellectual peculiarity which he exhibited was his marvellous receptivity. It is often the case that men who have been distinguished for originality and power of synthetic or analytic reasoning show little aptitude for absorbing the ideas of others. Their mind appears to run so strongly on its own course that in general it is little affected by what other people may be thinking or doing. The intense natural concentration of an original thinker upon his own line of thought often cannot be diverted to aspects foreign to that line of thought, even by a conscious effort on his own part. Let us compare, for instance, Mill's method of going to work with the profoundly different method of Herbert Spencer. Mill was, as I have said, receptive to an extraordinary degree ; he was for ever studying the works of others, reading on an enormous scale, a scholar in the truest sense of the word. Spencer, on the other hand, was almost completely inaccessible to ideas out of harmony with his natural modes of thought. He scarcely read at all ; when he did it was usually novels ; for many years of his life he never succeeded in reading a serious book for a longer period than an hour at a stretch. Spencer, in fact, never studied ; his philosophy welled up of its own accord from the depths of his mind ; it was a spontaneous outgrowth from his experience of life. He had a natural facility for attracting from every quarter facts which bore upon any theory he was promulgating, though without any effort to himself. It follows from this habit of mind that Spencer, though he could accumulate great stores of knowledge on any subject on which he had theorised, was plunged in abysmal ignorance on subjects on which he had formed no theory. Of history he knew nothing, of English literature

very little, of German literature not a word. The difference between him and Mill could scarcely be more marked.

A further difference in their manner of going to work is of great interest. When George Eliot asked Spencer how it was that he had no wrinkles on his forehead, as might be expected in one who had thought deeply, he replied that it was because he was never puzzled. His inactive disposition recoiled from the notion of wrestling with a problem in an attempt to solve it. Whenever he was confronted with a problem whose solution was not obvious to him he would push it aside, and abandon all conscious effort to solve it. But the matter would not usually be entirely lost sight of ; it would stick in the back of his mind, and by-and-by, very likely while thinking of something else, a little inward flash would occur, rendering the solution somewhat less obscure than it was before. With the lapse of time other flashes would follow ; and after several years, maybe, the solution of that problem would be set forth with the marvellous lucidity that Spencer commanded, as an integral portion of his system of philosophy. This is what we describe as true genius ; no puzzling, no conscious effort, no weary drudgery or labour, nothing that education can ever supply ; simply a succession of sudden inward flashes illuminating the whole of the darkened field.

How does this method compare with the method of John Stuart Mill ? The contrast is indeed great. Mill describes how he acquired "the mental habit to which I attribute all that I have ever done, or ever shall do, in speculation ; that of never abandoning a puzzle, but again and again returning to it until it was cleared up ; never allowing obscure corners of a subject to remain unexplored because they did not appear important ; never thinking that I perfectly understood any part of a subject until I understood the whole." In short, Mill's method was that of conscious and vehement effort directed towards the end he had in view. He solved his problems by laborious application and study ;

the very reverse of the brilliant and facile methods of Spencer.

A further characteristic difference between the two men is found when we inquire how each came by his literary style. Both had styles of exceptional lucidity and ease, but they were acquired in totally opposite ways. Spencer, after his manner, never studied style at all from the practical point of view, though he propounded a philosophic theory of it ("Essays," vol. ii.). In "Facts and Comments," pp. 78, 79, he says: "I have never studied style." "It never occurred to me . . . to take any author as a model. Indeed, the thought of moulding my style upon the style of any one else is utterly incongruous with my constitutional disregard of authority." "I may fitly say of my own style that from the beginning it has been unpremeditated. The thought of style, considered as an end in itself, has rarely if ever been present." Mill, on the other hand, cultivated his style "by the assiduous reading of other writers, both French and English, who combined, in a remarkable degree, ease with force, such as Goldsmith, Fielding, Pascal, Voltaire, and Courier."¹ Bain remarks of him:² "The undoubted excellence of his mature style was arrived at by a series of efforts that may well be celebrated among triumphs of perseverance."

The education supplied to the two in their youth was just such as happened to be adapted to the qualities of each. Mill's education was, as we have seen, an interminable round of study and effort. Not a moment was wasted; and he ascribes his own success to the fact that he entered on life with a knowledge that was a quarter of a century in advance of his competitors. Spencer, idle as a man, was idle also as a boy. He learnt very little, and nothing but what he liked; he could not go up to a university on account of the impossibility of his passing the entrance examinations. He entered life with a knowledge far inferior to that of

¹ "Autobiography," p. 117.

² "John Stuart Mill," p. 142.

his competitors; but he had what they had not, for Nature had endowed him with an ability and self-confidence which far more than compensated for his lack of learning and education.

These observations bring me to the proposition that I now wish to lay down; namely, that Mill's success was due far more to the rigour of his father's education than to any inborn genius of his own. That he would probably have admitted this himself may be inferred from the following passage in the "Autobiography":—

"If I had been by nature extremely quick of apprehension, or had possessed a very active and retentive memory, or were of a remarkably active and energetic character, the trial would not be conclusive; but in these natural gifts I am rather below than above par: what I could do, could assuredly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution; and if I have accomplished anything, I owe it among other fortunate circumstances, to the fact that through the early training bestowed on me by my father I started, I may fairly say, with an advantage of a quarter of a century over my contemporaries."

Mill, then, himself admits that he was not by nature highly endowed with respect to those qualities for which he afterwards became famous. Their development in him was due to the continual forcing to which he had been subjected in early life, and to the habits of abnegation and concentration thus acquired. Without his education, he would have done little or nothing. He lacked the characteristic of inborn genius, which shines out independently of education or acquirements. Though I should not accept Mill's belief that what he could do could be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution, still there seems to me no doubt that Mill's success was grounded on the marvelous extent of his acquirements and painstaking industry.

Summing up this estimate of Mill's character, we find that he greatly excelled the average of mankind in all the higher qualities of mind—in intellectual power, in con-

centration, in emotional strength, in will-power, and in active energy. That a man of so high a nervous development should be lacking on other sides is inevitable. I have already pointed out the low development of sensuality as compared with the average of mankind. That lack of sensuality is betrayed, not only in his estimate of the force of sexual passion, but in his indifference to luxuries of every kind. Bain observes:¹—

“He was exceedingly temperate as regarded the table; there was nothing of the gourmand superadded to his healthy appetite. To have seen his simple breakfast at the India House, and to couple with that his entire abstinence from eating or drinking till his plain dinner at six o’clock,—would be decisive of his moderation in the pleasures of the palate.”

A further deficiency, that is no doubt to be correlated with his intense mental development, was his poor physical development. He must have been born into the world with the constitution of a giant. Had he not been developed intellectually, he would probably have grown up with high muscular and athletic powers. But all the strength of his constitution was drafted off to the nervous system;² and we find him throughout life threatened by consumption. He suffered also from a ceaseless twitching of the eyelid over one eye—evidence enough how great was the strain which that overwhelming intellectual burden cast upon his physical constitution.

I have attempted to set forth the powers of mind and body which made Mill a great man. I am aware that, in doing so, I have only dealt with one half of the case. The achievement of greatness does not depend on the individual alone, but to at least an equal extent upon the environment in which he is placed.

¹ “John Stuart Mill,” by A. Bain, p. 149.

² Or, as Bain characteristically puts it in his biography of James Mill: “His [John’s] nervous energy was so completely absorbed in his unremitted intellectual application, as to be unavailable for establishing the co-ordinations of muscular dexterity.”